

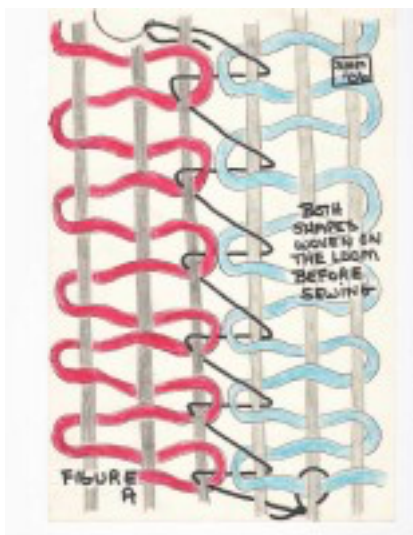


AMERICAN TAPESTRY ALLIANCE

## Slits

Susan Maffei

Basic tapestry techniques with few exceptions apply generally to all styles of tapestry weaving whether working on high warp or low, weaving from the back or the front. One of the most variable in choice is the sewing of slits. In the tradition of French high warp weaving as practiced at the Gobelins in Paris slits over 3 passes are avoided in normal circumstances. Double weft interlock is employed in place of the slit. An exception could be where a slit is used as a line i.e., face wrinkles around the eyes and mouth. The slit could be left open or joined only occasionally by a form of sewing. In low warp weaving at Beauvais in Paris the treatment is very much the same. Both manufactories are weaving from the back.



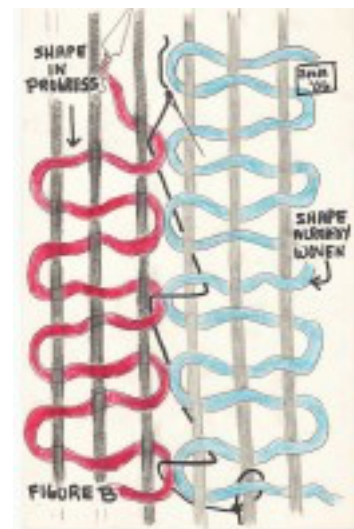
### Method A

Slits can be sewn after the tapestry is finished and still under tension on the loom or it can be removed from the loom and then sewn.

The latter, used at the Scheuer Studio in NYC in the 80's and 90's employed a strong thread that joined the two warp threads on either side of the slit with a figure eight type interlacing (figure A) hidden under the warp. It was executed with a curved upholstery needle and sewn from the front.

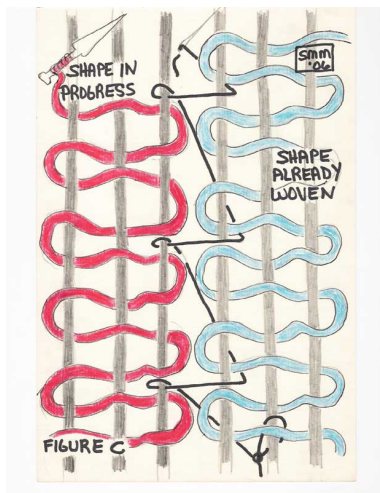
### Method B

Another sewing technique, perhaps most familiar by its use at the Dovecot Studios in Edinburgh Scotland, is employed as you are weaving one shape against another already completed shape. The advantage of this method allows you to concentrate on one shape at a time as opposed to interlocking where you must build all shapes together across the loom. It also allows for extra stability and a wrap



and sew technique up one warp thread which would be difficult with the sew after method in figure A. The sewing thread crosses with the weft only on the shape being woven and is then sewn around the edge warp of the already woven area (figure B). It is important to ensure that the stitch around the warp lies slightly lower than the locking weft so that as the weft beats down the stitch is lying at right angles to the slit and disappears between the wefts of the existing shape. Using a thread the color of the already woven area will help ensure invisibility. It can and was used on both weaving from the back and the front. Archie uses this method.

## Method C



Another variation used the sew as you go method from the Dovecot but locks around the end warps of both shapes and crosses on the unwoven side to keep the thread to the back (figure C). It gives the extra stability of warp to warp used by the Scheuer Studio but the convenience of the sew as you go method of the Dovecot. Susan uses this method.